

I support the continuation of the requirement for Amateur operators to demonstrate Morse code proficiency in order to obtain increased operating privileges, for the following reasons:

1. **High Availability of Emergency Communications Capability.** The Amateur service has a vested interest in developing and maintaining a pool of competent Morse code operators to ensure its relevance as an emergency communications service. While modern digital modes are available and effective during routine operation, each of them with the exception of Morse code requires the use of computer technology and software. In an extended emergency situation where commercial power is not available, it could become very difficult to supply a computer and monitor with the required power needed to use these technology-dependent digital modes. In contrast, by operating QRP (low power) using Morse code, an Amateur station could remain on the air almost indefinitely.
2. **Continuation of Incentive-Based Granting of Privileges.** Part 97.1 establishes the fundamental purposes of the Amateur Radio Service, and calls for the “continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art”. The current incentive-based system, which grants greater privileges based on increased demonstrated knowledge and skill levels, appropriately supports this fundamental purpose. While individual amateurs may not have a particular interest in routinely operating using Morse code, they nevertheless have an obligation to become familiar with all aspects of the radio art. Supporting this argument is the fact that while few amateurs actually use the digital modes, the written examination elements currently test operating knowledge of many digital modes. The current method of testing for basic (5 wpm) knowledge of Morse code is a reasonable way to accomplish the goal of encouraging amateurs to increase their knowledge and skills in all aspects of the radio art.